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Deep Purple

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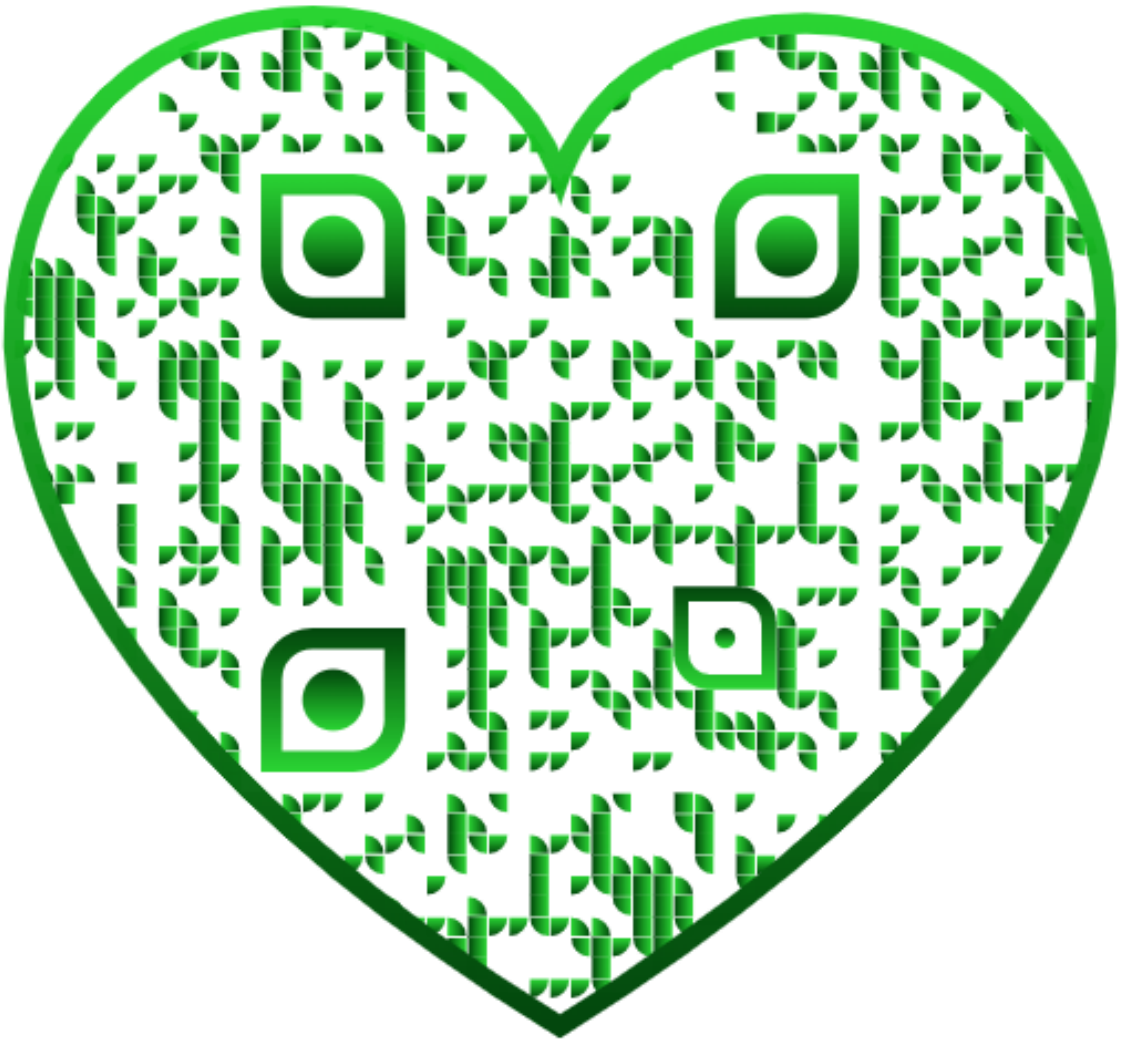

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Deep Purple are undoubtedly one of the most talented rock bands of their generation. Under the questionable leadership of Ritchie Blackmore they shot to fame in the late-sixties with their signature mix of hit songs and incredible musicianship. Here we look at the formation of the band and their pivotal performance with thier MKII line-up at the California Jam in 1971.

FORMING DEEP PURPLE

The creation of most rock bands was either a direct result of school friendships, or through fellow musicians bumping into each other on the touring circuit. The story of the formation of Deep Purple doesn't really adhere to either of these stereotypes. Indeed, in this age of endless bands being created by record companies or marketing men, and accused of being artificially 'manufactured', it is possible to argue that, to some extent, Deep Purple was a manufactured band. But to suggest that there is any comparison to be made with the tidal wave of boy bands that emerged in the 1990s... well, forget it. Deep Purple brought together superb musicians with enough pedigree to win Crufts!

Deep Purple's creation was the result of a brainchild of two businessmen who, having witnessed how 'popular music' had created many very wealthy individuals over the preceding decade, decided to have a crack at the music scene themselves. After all, it wasn't just individual musicians within bands such as the Beatles, the Rolling Stones and The Who who had become very wealthy, but their managers too. Among those who stood out was Colonel Tom Parker, who had masterminded the success of the first rock 'n' roll superstar, Elvis Presley. Albert Grossman had done the same with fellow American Bob Dylan, while England had its fair share of great managers, the most notable being the Beatles' Brian Epstein. By the time that John Coletta and Tony Edwards got together, Epstein had committed suicide, and fortunately, although his death shocked the rock world and shook its foundations, it didn't have fatal consequences for the genre. On the contrary, the next decade saw the rock business explode, both in financial rewards and in the excesses that many musicians indulged in. Thanks to the enterprising, if somewhat naïve, involvement of Edwards and Coletta, Deep Purple would ultimately become one of the top rock bands in the world, spearheading the second wave of world dominance by British acts.

The first wave had its roots at the beginning of the sixties, and really owed its inspiration to American rock 'n' roll pioneers such as Presley, Buddy Holly, Eddie Cochran, Chuck Berry, Jerry Lee Lewis and several others. Even though there was little media coverage when compared with today's world of saturated, twenty-four hour broadcasting, British teenagers were exposed to, and generally enraptured by, the sounds of rock 'n' roll via the odd TV show. BBC Radio's *Light Programme* and Radio Luxembourg were basically all that was on offer. Undoubtedly one of the most appealing aspects of the music was its rebellious image. It didn't take long for kids to find out that rock 'n' roll also annoyed the majority of their elders, and the youngsters lapped it up.

This matched the earliest musical experiences of two musicians who were living in the suburbs of West London, and who became founding members of Deep Purple. The first of these was Richard Hugh Blackmore. Although he was born in the West Country in Weston-super-Mare, Somerset on 14 April 1945, Blackmore's parents moved to Heston, Middlesex when he was just two years old. It was seeing Tommy Steele performing on *Six-Five Special* that first got Blackmore hooked: 'I wanted to play like him; I used to watch and strum along with my guitar; I couldn't play any chords, it looked good.' Blackmore had an average middle-class upbringing, and by the time that he failed his eleven-plus and missed out on attending grammar school, he was already hooked on rock 'n' roll and had cajoled his father into buying him an acoustic guitar: 'I pestered my dad to get me a guitar; I'd been listening to performers like Elvis Presley on the radio, so that would have been Scotty Moore I heard playing guitar. He bought me a Framus acoustic at the local guitar shop; it cost about seven guineas, and that was a lot of money in those days.'

The second musician who also grew up in the West London area, and would ultimately become a founding member of Deep Purple, was Nick Simper. Simper had seen and been impressed with Blackmore in the Jaywalkers, but recalls, 'When he got into the Savages I was really pleased because the Savages was always one of my favourite bands; Ricky Brown was the best bass player around without a doubt. Carlo (Little) was definitely the top drummer; they were probably the best band on the London scene. Ritchie's individuality hadn't developed by then, he didn't have a particularly great sound or style in those days. What set Ritchie apart was pure speed; nobody could keep up with him. When he joined Sutch he started doing the fast instrumentals it was bloody great.'

Simper was born a few months after Blackmore on 3 November 1945 at Frogmore House Maternity Home in Norwood Green, Middlesex. Like Blackmore, Simper was drawn to the music scene of the day: 'I guess it all started with Lonnie Donegan. Like most young

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people in the 1950's, I was completely knocked out by the excitement of his records. My first record purchase was Lonnie's *Gambling Man*, on 78rpm of course, which survived for two days until it was dropped and smashed in two!' While on a family holiday in Devon in 1959, Simper was first exposed to the sound that had a profound effect on his future musical direction: 'An amazing disc called *Please Don't Touch* by Johnny Kidd & the Pirates, which I could not get enough of. Little did I know back then as a twelve year old, that one day I would be a member of the Pirates!'

John Douglas Lord was born on 9 June 1941 and, coming from a musical family, by 1948 his parents had enrolled him for piano lessons. Unlike many kids, who soon tire of the rigid structures of formal tuition, Lord stuck with the lessons for ten years, attaining all the grades in the process and passing the Royal Academy of Music exams, as well as getting an A Level in music at Grammar school. But Lord's love of music accompanied an interest in another of the arts, and he had serious ambitions to become an actor. Upon leaving school, he took a job as a clerk in a solicitor's office, and he spent some of the money earned on records. His musical tuition had developed a healthy love for classical music but, on hearing Jerry Lee Lewis, his mind was opened up to the world of rock 'n' roll. Several years later he commented, 'The first four bars of *Whole Lotta Shakin' Going On* totally turned my head around. I tried like hell to make the old piano at home sound like that but it wouldn't. That's when I realised there was more to rock 'n' roll than meets the ear.'

The other two musicians that became part of the first Deep Purple line-up were based a few miles west of England's capital city, which was the centre of the music business. Rod Evans was born in Edinburgh on 19 January 1947, but when Rod was still a nipper, the family moved south to Slough in Berkshire. Vocalist Evans took his cues from Cliff Bennett and the Hollies' Allan Clarke. His first band, the Horizons, were sufficiently good enough to play the clubs in Hamburg. After their drummer quit, the band had no hesitation in approaching a

young drummer from a small-time band, the Shindigs. Ian Anderson Paice was born in Nottingham on 29 June 1948. Paice's father worked for the civil service and, after a three-year contract in Germany, the family returned to England to set up home in Bicester, Oxfordshire when Ian was just seven years old. Like Jon Lord, Paice grew up in a musical family and his father had played piano in dance bands during the thirties and forties. From an early age he had a natural desire to hit things and, once the furniture had suffered more abuse than his parents could accept, Ian's father invested a small fortune in his first drum kit. It turned out to be more than a passing fad and, by the time he was fifteen, Paice would sometimes play with his father's band on a Saturday night, earning a few bob in the process. Growing up with this style of music helped to develop a natural swing to his playing, a style that has been influential throughout his career and one that few rock drummers employ.

Ian Paice's first rock 'n' roll band was Georgie and the Rave Ons, who gigged around the Oxford area and changed their name to the Shindigs by 1965. Although the Shindigs released a couple of singles, when they supported Rod Evans' band on several occasions, Paice became aware how much more professional Evans' band were and jumped at the opportunity to join. It was a wise decision as, soon after, not only did the Horizons change their name to MI5, but also got a deal with Parlophone Records and cut their first single, *You'll Never Stop Me Loving You*. Another name change to The Maze appeared to help the band progress further, and trips to Germany and Italy ensued.

It was during one of these trips that Ian Paice first bumped into Ritchie Blackmore on board the ferry to Hamburg. The Maze was on their way to Italy and, after working there for three months, got a three-week stint at Hamburg's famous Star Club, where once again Blackmore and Paice crossed paths. This time Blackmore got to see the drummer perform live and was duly impressed with his flashy style. Blackmore was pretty restless at this stage in his life: very little work was coming his way, and he spent most of his time just practising and

jamming with bands at the Star Club. Having spent the past six years as a backing musician, he was desperate to get his own band together and offered Paice the role of drummer. Paice declined as, in truth, Blackmore had no band, and The Maze was earning sufficiently good money that Paice wasn't prepared to leave it for a speculative project. In 1972 Paice spoke to *Disc* magazine saying, 'This is where I ran into Ritchie Blackmore. He'd been there a year, sort of stagnating. He sent his girlfriend up to me and she said Ritchie would like to offer me a job – Ritchie does things like this. I went, "Oh really!", 'cos I'd heard of him, Ritchie Blackmore. I thought great, so I said, "What's he got?" She said he didn't have a band yet, so I said I was sorry and went back home.'

It was now 1967, and back in England both Jon Lord and Nick Simper wound up in the same band. The Garden were the backing band for The Flowerpot Men, who were cashing in on their 'flower power' hit single, *Let's Go to San Francisco*. Following Kidd's death and the subsequent failure of the Pirates to continue without their influential leader, Simper initially teamed up with the Savages' drummer Carlo Little backing Billie Davies. They toured in Germany where, like Paice, Simper also bumped into Blackmore: 'When I was working with Billie Davis we had Ged Peck with us who was no slouch, but Carlo was always pushing Ritchie to me. We bumped into Ritchie and he was doing nothing at all. Carlo said, "Why don't Nick and me come over. We'll live in Hamburg a bit?" Because he was getting a reputation, just by walking up to the Star Club and sitting in with people and jamming. He could get up and blow everybody away and just walk away like the man in black, like a gunfighter. Carlo talked him into that but the only reason we didn't go was because to get it going I was going to handle the vocals, keep it a three-piece but at the time I got afflicted with this terrible tonsillitis. Even with Billie Davis I was just singing backing harmonies but I would get a sore throat and I couldn't speak for a week so there was no way I could have gone out and do ten or fifteen numbers singing so we abandoned it.'

Despite these difficulties, it was clear to Simper that there was great chemistry present, 'Ritchie immediately stood out as something special, when I first saw him I thought, "This guy is something a bit different", because they would do Shadows tunes but he wouldn't play them like Hank Marvin – he would suddenly break out this amazing solo. I had always been a fan of Ritchie he was my number one, him with Jimmy Page and Jim Sullivan were about the best, they all came from the same area and they were the men that showed everybody the way.'

1967 proved to be a pivotal year for rock music. In February, Blackmore's former employer, producer Joe Meek, went out in a blaze of publicity, shooting his landlady before turning the shotgun on himself. Although Meek had several problems that contributed in pushing him over the edge, his brand of pop was losing favour and, like many who had helped to shape the first half of the decade's musical landscape, he wasn't moving with the times. The American guitarist Jimi Hendrix was one of the key new artists taking the music world by storm. Although his first hit, *Hey Joe*, entered the UK charts in the last week of December 1966, it was 1967 that proved to be the year when Hendrix burst onto the scene and captured the public's imagination with his uninhibited approach. The music scene was changing rapidly; many musicians saw a life outside the three-minute pop tunes. An emphasis on virtuosity and more complex compositions were pushing the boundaries of what could be achieved. The Beatles were as quick as anyone to move with the times, and in the summer of 1967 released the ground-breaking *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*.

Blackmore observed that, with the changing face of popular music, the opportunity to showcase his undoubted talent, developed from years on the road, was just around the corner. Harmony bands such as the Hollies and the Searchers were no longer hogging the limelight and, with the focus now firmly on musicianship, Blackmore was confident he could achieve the same level of success that Hendrix and

Cream's Eric Clapton were attaining. While in Hamburg, he made his first attempts to put a band together. Spending so much time at the Star Club, Blackmore was able to pick musicians he thought would be ideal for the type of band he had in mind.

He drafted in a German bass player by the name of Kurt Lungen and, on drums, a Scotsman named Ricky Munro who was doing a month's residency with his band The Rite Tyme. Munro recalls the type of music they were working on: 'He spoke a lot about American black blues, he loved that. The numbers we were doing ourselves, the original ones were mainly based on things he had gleaned off these old black blues players. I was pretty sure he was very much influenced by that, a more modern equivalent. One number had to have a drum solo in it. A lot of it was just jamming and he also had ideas for songs. We just followed our noses and the ones that turned out to be quite exciting became a permanent fixture in the set list.' One number they worked on called *Mandrake Root* was to be the name of the band, but sadly the project never got beyond a few rehearsals and *Mandrake Root* never performed live.

It is no coincidence that harmony bands such as the Searchers have been mentioned because, ironically, it was due to the involvement of the Searchers' ex-drummer-cum-vocalist Chris Curtis that the Deep Purple machine initially came into being. While Blackmore was in Germany, frustrated that his musical ideas were not coming to fruition, back in England Curtis had grand ideas. Like Blackmore, Chris Curtis had worked the Hamburg scene, but by 1966 he had quit the Searchers and had other musical visions. Somewhat fortuitously, Curtis moved into a flat in Gunter Grove, Fulham, South West London. The large building was home to several musicians including Denny Laine from the Moody Blues, as well as Jon Lord. Curtis talked to Lord about his vision for a band based on the concept of a roundabout, with a revolving turnaround of musicians. The most important thing that Curtis did was to introduce Lord to his financial backer, Tony Edwards. Curtis had already sold the idea to Edwards,

who at the time ran a family textile business. Edwards had already dabbled in the pop business, taking on the roll of manager for up and coming singer Ayshea Hague. Hague's singing career never took off, although she did host the long-running ITV show *Lift Off*. More importantly, Edwards's involvement in trying to promote her career had brought him into contact with Chris Curtis. No doubt Edwards saw that it was worth taking a risk, as Curtis was already an established name in the business. Furthermore, Curtis brushed shoulders with many of the big names, including the Beatles, and Edwards duly agreed to invest in Curtis's musical roundabout idea.

Although convinced of the potential, Edwards was also aware how much cash would be needed and, seeing that it may be too much for one man financially, he brought in his friend John Coletta as a fellow investor. Coletta was the managing director of Castle, Chappel & Partners, an advertising and marketing consultancy. As well as agreeing to involve himself, Coletta also suggested a third investor and brought in a used car salesman, Ron Hire. The initials of their surnames created the company that was to be known as HEC Enterprises.

Although Curtis had some undoubtedly wacky ideas (most probably the results of mind-altering substances) he did have at least one sensible plan, namely to involve a superb guitarist who was languishing in the seedy St. Pauli district of Hamburg. Curtis had crossed paths with Blackmore a few years earlier when the Searchers performed at the Star Club, and even though Blackmore's name was relatively unknown in his homeland, the musicians' circle was more than familiar with his talents. Even Eric Clapton had crossed paths with Blackmore in late 1966. During one of his stints with Screaming Lord Sutch, the Blackmore-led Savages had wound up as the support act for Cream at Sussex University in Brighton. As the Savages' bass player Tony Dangerfield recalled: 'We shared what was a classroom as a dressing room and we pulled all the stops out that night. I'll never forget this: Ritchie walked into the dressing room and Clapton's picking his Les Paul up and Ritchie heard him say, "Fuck it I don't know why I'm

bothering going on." Ritchie had pulled all the stops out and we got thrown off that tour. They had us off straight away. Ritchie knew that he was better and he proved it. Put his money where his mouth was that night.'

The incredible levels of self-belief and, to some degree, arrogance that were displayed proved invaluable over the next few years and ensured that Deep Purple made it to the very top. This self-belief also meant that, when Blackmore received an invitation to come to England and check out the new band being put together by Chris Curtis, he wasn't initially convinced with what he saw. On the plus side, it did bring Blackmore into contact with Jon Lord and the pair immediately struck up a good working relationship. However, Curtis's ideas and behaviour were becoming more irrational by the day. His idea for a musical roundabout with other musicians coming and going as they please certainly caused some concerns for Jon Lord. Lord saw that it could be a very short-term experience. He explained the way Curtis described that it would work: 'It would just be the three of us as the core, and the reason it would be called Roundabout was that other musicians would jump on and jump off as we chose to have them in the band, and he sold the idea to Tony Edwards.' Lord was worried that he might well be one of those who soon found himself off the roundabout, although Curtis said, "No Jon, you and me will be the core of the roundabout."' It may have seemed like a somewhat fanciful idea, but, as Lord explained in 1995, 'Please do remember this was 1967!' This was at the height of the flower power explosion, free love and all that, and such thinking was not uncommon. But before long, Curtis drifted out of the equation. Tony Edwards remained sufficiently enthralled by the prospect of managing a rock band that he agreed to continue to give Jon Lord his support in recruiting the required musicians. Realising that there was sufficient financial investment in the project, Blackmore was also keen to keep things afloat as he saw that the opportunity at last to do just what he wanted was potentially about to see the light of day.

See the light of day it did – with this MKI line-up Deep Purple achieved moderate success, breaking into the charts and touring with such greats as Cream. Their studio albums grew steadily in popularity, and the change to MKII only seemed to enhance the band's musical prowess. MKII really found their feet on the astonishing *Deep Purple in Rock* release, which has been heralded as one of heavy metal's defining albums. This shift to truly heavy rock set the stage for Deep Purple's rise to the highest echelons of rock, and it is there, in 1974 that we join them now.

The American spring tour that kicked off in April 1974, and took the band through to mid-June was probably the toughest Deep Purple undertook. Sound engineer Bob Simon recalled how fraught things were between Gillan and Blackmore: '... probably the third tour I did with them they were completely on different trips. There wasn't much socialising between them.' According to Roger Glover, 'The last year I don't think Ritchie and Ian Gillan spoke one word to each other.'

Blackmore was in two minds whether or not to continue with the band or depart and do his own thing. Once Ian Paice had decided that it was in his own interest to carry on watching the money roll in with Deep Purple, he was left with the job of convincing Blackmore to stay. Blackmore eventually agreed, but in an unexpected turnaround, he did so only on the condition that Glover was replaced. 'I wanted to form this thing with Phil Lynott,' he explained. 'I said I wanted to leave, and Ian Paice said, "Could anything persuade you to stay, because we're on to such a good thing. Why mess it up?" I said, "No, I want to get together with Phil, myself, you. It will be a great band. I want to do a bluesier thing." But I also had hesitations – and I think Phil did too because he was doing well. We wanted to play together but he'd just had a hit (*Whiskey in the Jar*). But Paicey was reluctant to leave.'

With Blackmore's visions of a bluesier band, he considered that Glover's bass playing wasn't suitable for what he had in mind. Seeing

that Blackmore was more crucial to the band's ongoing success, Paice and Lord agreed to go along with the guitarist's wishes. Given that, after Blackmore, Glover was the next major composer within the band, the desire to split with a major song-writing asset on the strength of his bass playing certainly seemed like an odd decision. It's quite feasible that what was playing on Blackmore's mind was the opportunity to dominate the group's song writing. With the records selling by the millions, and the biggest chunk of the income coming from publishing, with Glover and Gillan out of the equation Blackmore could in effect mould the band exactly to his requirements. Surrendering musical partnerships of the calibre that Lord and Paice offered was also something that no wise man would want to do lightly.

Years later, Ian Gillan reflected on the break up of the band: 'We were all kids that had never experienced this before even though we were pretty hard-nosed pros by then and we hadn't had to deal with things at this level and at the time you have to sacrifice a lot of your own personal integrity up to a point and doing things you don't want to do for the sake of the "business". I think we were tired and in need of a break but it all got pretty hairy and we broke up.'

Even with Gillan's lengthy notice there appeared to be little urgency in seeking a replacement, and only two possible candidates were considered. Paul Rodgers was always first on Ritchie Blackmore's list. Rodger's band Free had been through some rough times and had split up in April 1971, only to reform early the following year. Andy Fraser soon quit after that, and Paul Kossoff's drug habit caused immense problems for the band. By early 1973, Free had called a halt on proceedings for good. However, although Rodgers was free to join Deep Purple (pun intended), it was unclear whether or not he was interested. Along with Free drummer Simon Kirke he had aspirations to try and develop something new. The other singer who had caught their attention was Glenn Hughes, bassist and vocalist with the Midlands outfit Trapeze. Blackmore, Lord and Paice had originally

seen Trapeze in America in late 1972. Back in England in early 1973, Trapeze played four nights at London's Marquee club between 8 January–23 March and again members of Deep Purple were in the audience for one of these gigs. They were impressed with Hughes, although as much for his bass playing as his singing, even though the decision to dispense with Glover hadn't been made at this point.

Glenn Hughes was born in Cannock, Staffordshire on 21 August 1952 and had music in his blood. His first band involvement was as early as 1965 with the Hooker Lees. Although the band name derived from blues guitarist John Lee Hooker, they were more likely to perform Rolling Stones covers. The Hooker Lees changed their name to the Intruders, but Hughes quickly moved on to another band called the News, where he was both lead guitarist and vocalist. By 1968 he had joined Finders Keepers, where he made his recording debut on backing vocals for the group's one and only single that was all but completed before Hughes had joined. Towards the end of the year Hughes formed Trapeze along with guitarist Mel Galley and drummer Dave Holland. They recruited a vocalist in John Jones and also had Terry Rowley on organ. By 1970 Trapeze had been signed to the Moody Blues Threshold label and released its self-titled debut album. Rowley and Jones departed soon after its release and, with the band stripped down to a trio, Hughes took over lead vocals. A second and much stronger album *Medusa* was released later the same year. The band's third release, *You Are the Music... We're Just the Band*, proved to be Trapeze's strongest album and things really kicked off for Trapeze in America following a tour supporting the Moody Blues. Their popularity increased enormously, particularly in the Southern States, and they were soon playing to large audiences in Tennessee and Texas, while still performing club venues like the Marquee back in Britain.

With Blackmore, Lord and Paice showing up at several Trapeze gigs, Hughes eventually started to sense they were checking him out, although it certainly took a while for the penny to drop, as he

explained in 2005: 'I was pretty slow to understand because I was so young and so naïve that I just thought they liked the band. Lordy and Paicey would come one night and Ritchie would always come alone or with his wife. Maybe the third time I figured something's up here. I think it was the last time Ritchie came to see me. They'd seen me twice in LA at the Whisky, and then Ritchie came again in London and Jon again in London at the Marquee. It was then that I started to realise and I'd heard a rumour that Gillan was leaving. All along I never realised they wanted me to take Roger's place; I thought they just wanted me to be the singer.'

Despite the fact that in the last few months the MKII line-up were soldiering on, audiences would have been oblivious to the internal discord. During the final American tour in May, ABC TV filmed a gig at Hofstra University in New York. Although ABC filmed the entire show, it was edited into a twenty-five minute broadcast and sadly, as was so typical of the times, the complete, unedited reels were re-used! However, what footage remains is a superb example of Deep Purple on stage. The most interesting thing about this footage is the on stage atmosphere. Given the disharmony that was festering within the band at this stage, they gave no indication of this to the audience. In fact the band looks like they were having a whale of a time, and bearing in mind that a month later MKII concluded with a last gig in Japan, the onstage banter is quite astonishing.

Although Ian Gillan's performance showed a man who looked happy that his tenure was coming to an end, for Roger Glover it was later in the tour before he actually realised that something was afoot. 'During that tour, I think it was in Jacksonville, I certainly became aware of a coldness towards me from the others. I just didn't feel included anymore in discussions. There was no conversation directed my way and it's little pointers like that, which make you feel uneasy. I finally prized it out of Tony Edwards after the show. I went to his room and said, "What's up?" He said, "Nothing." But I knew something was up and I refused to leave his room until he told me,

and he said, basically the deal is this. Ritchie will stay in the band as long as I left but they didn't want to tell me because they wanted me to complete the tour, so I handed in my notice, very sadly. I certainly don't want to be in a band that doesn't want me and the rest of that tour was uncomfortable, I went through many emotions.'

After discovering his fate in Jacksonville, Glover had to endure two shows in Florida, one in Georgia and, to round the US tour off, a gig in Hawaii. The Hawaiian capital of Honolulu was an ideal end of tour venue, allowing the band to break up the long journey for the remaining few MKII dates in Japan. Unlike a year earlier, the Japanese gigs didn't have the same enjoyable atmosphere that had been portrayed on the *Made in Japan* recordings. The show at Tokyo's Budokan was marred by rioting after Blackmore chose not to do an encore. Photos of the venue with a sea of demolished seating have been used in several sleeve designs and publications on the band, and help to convey the audience's annoyance. Soundman Bob Simon will never forget the events that kicked off once the crowd realised the band wasn't going to return after finishing the main set with *Space Truckin'*. 'I'm back in the hotel finally a couple of hours later, and I'm on the elevator, getting to my room. My clothes are all tore up, I'm all bloody and I've been fighting with all these Jap guys and Ritchie's getting out of the elevator and I said to him, "What the fuck was that all about?' Because he didn't want to do an encore. He said, "The audience sucked. They didn't deserve an encore so fuck 'em." But we had just taken a good bollocking and all the equipment got busted up. He liked to see things happening.'

While fans smashed up the venue in Tokyo, at the final gig at the Koseinenkin in Osaka on 29 June 1973, it was the band that trashed their own equipment. German photographer Didi Zill, who had been taking photos of the band for the past three years, primarily for Germany's *Bravo* magazine, captured the scene perfectly. At the end of the gig, Zill snapped a shot of Ian Paice's drum kit strewn all over the place, and a blanket of dry ice smoke forming a thick covering

across the stage floor. Roger Glover stood in front of his amps, with his bass guitar in hand. The only other member of the band on stage was Ian Gillan. Both men were surveying the scene for the last time, undoubtedly with mixed emotions. For Gillan, the elevation to Purple had seen egos and bank balances soar and relationships decline. For Glover, a forced departure meant that a writing partnership with his long time friend was now redundant. Before leaving the stage, Ian Gillan gave a farewell speech: 'All I want to say to all of you is thank you very much – you are great. Thank you for everything you have given us in Japan and thank you, really, for the representatives of the whole world as far as we are concerned. Thank you and God bless you for everything you have ever given us. And this is the last night, the end. God bless you, thanks a lot.'

Given that Ian Gillan had given the band nine months' notice of his departure, it might seem odd that no one was ready to step into his role following the last gig. Glenn Hughes had already been notified of his appointment to the band as Glover's replacement, and although his initial assumption was that he would be the sole vocalist as well, he appeared more than happy to combine the dual role with bass playing. This was helped because the one man that Blackmore had in mind as lead vocalist was Paul Rodgers, a singer of immense quality who was greatly admired by Hughes. If Purple could secure Rodgers they would be getting two world-class vocalists for the price of one. 'When Ian left it was an enormous gap to fill – we had to find the kind of singer who could carry that weight on his shoulders. So the guy we obviously thought of was Paul Rodgers,' said Blackmore. Rodgers had certainly built up a reputation over the past five years as one of Britain's finest rock singers during his time as front man with blues based Free. With Blackmore's desire to steer Purple into a bluesier direction, Rodgers would have been ideal for the role. However, Paul Rodgers had other ideas. His stature had grown to the point where joining an established band just wasn't as appealing as creating his own, new band. Like Blackmore, Rodgers has a reputation as

something of a control freak and, despite leaked press reports that he was to join Deep Purple, Rodgers turned down the invitation before even having a blow with the band. Instead, along with Free's Simon Kirke, he focused on creating a new band and by the end of 1973 Bad Company was born. Not only was Deep Purple left with egg on their face, but this also meant they were back to square one and left with the unenviable task of placing adverts in the music press, just like they had done when they got Rod Evans five years earlier.

However, by now Purple was a globally successful band and they were quite simply inundated with tapes by established singers and would be superstars. Wading though the tapes that arrived at the management's London office was a turgid time for the remaining members. 'When it became known that we were looking for a new singer we were swamped with tapes. We tried to listen but we really had a hard time finding anything decent,' recalled Lord. Fortunately John Coletta did much of the pruning. 'About forty tapes were sent to me,' said Coletta. 'I went through them and whittled it down and played them to Jon, Ian and Ritchie.'

Eventually they listened to a tape that actually impressed them. It was from an unknown semi-pro singer from North East England called David Coverdale. 'Auditioning a singer wasn't really difficult because there was only ever one guy we auditioned, David Coverdale. I think the other guys were listening to hundreds of cassettes of singers,' explained Glenn Hughes. Hughes' comment is a little wide of the mark, as Coletta recalled that quite a few guys were actually auditioned at a place called Scorpio Sound in Marylebone Road under the Capital Radio Studios in central London. It could well be that some auditions were held before Hughes joined the original trio, or simply that his memory has failed him. To those who were invited down for an audition, they had no idea they were applying for the role of lead singer in one of the biggest bands in the world. 'It was quite a shock for them,' recalled Coletta. 'None of these people knew what they were walking into. They thought it was a band just starting up

or even a little way up the ladder, but not something as big as Purple.' he explained.

Ian Paice recalled the moment he first heard Coverdale's tape: 'David's tape was rubbish except for four bars where he actually sung really hard and I thought there was something in his voice that was really good, so I said let's get him down here. He had these incredibly awful glasses on and this strange, not quite straight hair, and he had an eye that wandered around. I'm sure it was a nervous thing and he was massively overweight but we got him in the studio and he sang very well. But part of the deal was, if you are going to come into the band, you've got to look a bit different to that, because he looked exactly what he was, a chap from a clothing store who really didn't give a toss about himself. He agreed to everything because he wanted in and became the glorious David Coverdale that everybody knows and loves today.'

David Coverdale remembered the process later: 'I sent a tape and a photograph down, asking if I could have the job basically! I was working in a shop and I didn't expect to get the job with Purple. If I got an audition, I was hoping... I knew they had their own record label, I was hoping they could offer me something on my own or say, "look your voice isn't the sort of voice we are looking for but we know someone who is." But after blowing with the band I couldn't believe it, I went apeshit, I couldn't sleep. I'd always worked with good musicians but this was like another level. It was so in tune with what I wanted and fortunately it was what they wanted so it worked out well. But it was the first time I had got off my arse to do something and it paid off.'

David Coverdale was born on 22 September 1951 in Saltburn-by-the-Sea, North Yorkshire. Having been plucked from obscurity, naturally his musical career was far less spectacular than any of the other band members. His parents operated a small club in the town and the Coverdale family lived in the accommodation above it. With a jukebox in the club, these surroundings helped to introduce the

youngster to the happening sixties music. Jimi Hendrix soon became a firm favourite and fights broke out at the local youth club as young Coverdale regularly fought to get his selections on the record player. Although he taught himself to play guitar he soon veered towards singing. After leaving school Coverdale enrolled at an art college in Middlesbrough, where he soon got to meet fellow musicians. By 1967 he had helped to form a band called Denver Mule who managed a few gigs over the next year or so. The ironically named Purple Onion Coffee Bar was a regular social gathering venue, and it was there that Coverdale met a young guitarist called Mickey Moody from a band called Tramline that had secured a record deal with Island Records. Coverdale occasionally helped out as a roadie, but he had clearly set his sights higher. When the irregular Denver Mule split, Coverdale managed to get a gig with the Skyliners. Although the band was only semi-pro, Coverdale quit college to focus on the group full-time. They were earning enough money that he could afford to do so, although the rest of the band continued to keep their day jobs.

The Skyliners changed its name to The Government in 1969, but the major drawback for Coverdale was the band's 'double life.' The group had to flit between shaping a set for the cabaret scene and their preferred style of rock for the university fraternity in order to get a sufficient amount of gigs. At one of the latter style gigs, they even supported Deep Purple at Bradford University on 22 November 1969. Ian Gillan had only been in the band for a few months at that stage, but clearly Jon Lord must have felt that it wasn't inevitable that Gillan would shape up. Lord asked for Coverdale's address and number. 'Jon said if things didn't work out with Gillan he might give me a call.' Claimed Coverdale. Fans can decide for themselves as to whether or not Lord and Deep Purple did the right thing in not contacting Coverdale again! As the seventies kicked off, The Government started to play the big hit sounds of the day, including Black Sabbath's *Paranoid*, and they even did a version of *Black Night*. By 1971 they pondered whether or not to turn professional and, despite the fact that

they decided against it, they did at least cut a four-track EP, although only a few copies were pressed up for friends and relatives, making it one of the rarest recordings to feature any Deep Purple member. With insufficient money coming in, Coverdale had no option but to take a day job and chose shop work selling men's clothes at the local boutique. When gigs were available the evenings were spent singing in a Santana style group called River's Invitation. By early 1973 he had put a four-piece together to perform at a local charity gig, billing the band as the Fabulosa Brothers. It developed into a once a week gig at a local pub, while the day job kept up a steady income.

Needless to say, for a young semi-pro vocalist plucked from obscurity, David Coverdale's audition was a moment in his life he will never forget: 'Paicey and Lordy were already at the studio when I arrived... Lord was exceptionally charming and welcoming, doing his best to put me at ease, while Ian messed around on his Ludwig drumkit. Ritchie arrived next... He completely ignored me, other than a quick surreptitious look to check me out... a brief nod when we made eye contact. Without missing a beat I was off to the whisky for a quick, nervous sip. Glenn was late and came tumbling into the studio with all his baggage, sunglasses falling off, laughing like a madman. He apologised to everyone for being late then proceeded to take his beautiful red Rickenbacker bass out of its case. Glenn was one of the most natural musicians I've ever worked with. I never, ever saw him practice. When it came time to work he simply picked up his instrument, and played flawlessly every time. Slowly, but surely they all started to play and lo and behold they were jamming on grooves – not Purple songs just cool grooves, making it up as they went along.'

Coverdale had bought a couple of the albums and was expecting them to try him out on the group's own repertoire. Even though he was undeniably nervous, Coverdale did tell the lads that he had learnt *Strange Kind of Woman*, and they soon did a run through of it after which Coverdale recalls Blackmore saying, "Okay, you can sing rock,

let's see what you can do with a ballad. Anything you want to sing?", "Do you know the Beatles song *Yesterday* in F?" I asked.' Coverdale is of the opinion that it was the ability to sing the ballad that was the key to his appointment. 'I'm not sure, but I think that one actually got me the gig.'

The search for a replacement vocalist had also given Purple a lengthy, unexpected break, which was nevertheless a welcome one from the rigours of endless touring. With the departure of Gillan and Glover, Blackmore was the only regular songwriter left in the band, but he soon encouraged Hughes and Coverdale to come up with ideas. Both spent time at Blackmore's Surrey home, working alongside him. Hughes had previously written songs with Trapeze, but for Coverdale it was a completely new experience. In September the new MKIII line-up decamped to the splendour of Clearwell Castle in the Forest of Dean, Gloucestershire to continue writing and to rehearse new song ideas. At first Coverdale felt like a fish out of water, but it was an impressive place for him to celebrate his twenty-second birthday on 22 September as lead singer of Deep Purple. In particular the lavish living that was experienced in such a luxurious location was a complete revelation for someone who had just left his job as a boutique salesman in exchange for the bright lights. Coverdale was also surprised by the personal indulgences of his new, fellow band members: 'Interestingly no drugs had surfaced and there had been no discussion about them. It appeared that booze was the drug of choice for the Deeps, well at that time, anyway...' he recalled.

The day after Coverdale's birthday the music press was invited to Clearwell for the unveiling of the new line-up. After a month at Clearwell, lots of new ideas were in place but before they could be recorded, Jon Lord had been commissioned to do another performance of his Gemini Suite, this time in Germany. Germany was far more receptive to this blending of rock and classical than UK audiences. Furthermore, apart from performing the *Gemini Suite*, it also gave him the opportunity to premiere a new composition. Lord

had hooked up with Eberhard Schöner, conductor of the Munich Chamber Opera Orchestra, with whom he jointly composed a new piece, *Continuo on B.A.C.H*, an interpretation of an unfinished fugue by J.S Bach. The concert was staged at the Circus Krone in Munich on 4 October. New boy Glenn Hughes went along to share the vocal duties along with Purple Records signing Yvonne Elliman. The other rock musicians brought in for the event were Spencer Davis Group's drummer and guitarist, Pete York and Ray Fenwick, as well as Roxy Music's saxophonist Andy Mackay. As was the case with the *Concerto*, the exposure of the event in Germany prompted German TV to commission Lord and Schöner to provide another new composition for the final gala night of Munich's four-day Prix Jeunesse festival for young composers in June 1974.

October also saw Ian Gillan announcing the opening of his new recording studio. Gillan had bought the De Lane Lea Studio in Holborn before his departure from Purple and renamed it Kingsway. Meanwhile, following Lord's orchestral venture, Deep Purple reconvened in November to record the first album with Coverdale and Hughes. They chose to return to Montreux, Switzerland, the scene of one of their most successful moments. This time the upheavals that had occurred with *Machine Head* were thankfully non-existent. They continued in the Purple tradition of not using a conventional studio, and the modern conference centre proved an adequate venue, along with the Rolling Stones Mobile Unit and the band's trusty engineer Martin Birch. The music shifted towards the bluesier style that Blackmore had desired and was the architect of. Coverdale and Hughes fitted in well and the vocal harmonies also gave Purple a new sound. Another noticeable difference was Jon Lord's use of synthesizers. Contemporaries like Keith Emerson had been using synthesizers since the start of the seventies; Lord was slower to embrace the new technology, considering himself an organist first and foremost. He had started using synthesizers on stage at the tail end of MKII's existence, but now incorporated them into the new studio recordings.

The traditional Purple sound was evident with the title track *Burn*. This was a perfect example of the group's rejuvenation. Blackmore came up with the riff, which Jon Lord soon pointed out was George Gershwin's *Fascinating Rhythm*! Blackmore claimed it was purely coincidental and that he had not heard it before, but considering his musical knowledge and the fact that his 1965 solo single covered a Glenn Miller tune, it's more likely that the melody was subconsciously in his mind when he wrote it. Both Blackmore and Lord bristled with renewed energy and put in great solos, and Lord's use of synthesizers was evident and entwined perfectly with his excellent Hammond organ work; however, without doubt the star was Ian Paice. His drumming style was full of exuberance and reminiscent of a young lad let loose on a kit for the first time, but with the added years of skill and technique he had acquired, he spills out all over the track with fills at every opportunity. The twin vocal effect added a new dimension to the band's sound and it was apparent from the outset that this group had no intentions of resting on their laurels or the image of the previous line-up.

Epitomising the blues direction was the seven-minute *Mistreated*. 'It's very difficult within the blues frame to come out with something that's different and that's why I find it a challenge with the blues. It's a case of slowing down and playing three or four notes very well with a good vibrato, which is a lot more difficult than it seems on the surface,' said Blackmore in 1983. Purple had always flirted with the blues, such as the slightly more up tempo blues, or rhythm and blues as it is better known, exemplified on tracks such as *Lazy*. With *Mistreated*, Blackmore showed that as a blues player he was equal to anyone and, although most people revered him for his ability to play fast, when slowing it down as he does on this track his understanding of the blues is clearly evident. The minimalist approach that so many other players often forget is the key to the song's quality. It is as much about what is left out as the actual notes played that make it such a great song. Coverdale's vocal sits perfectly over the music and

he produced a superb, heartfelt performance. It would be hard to imagine the previous line-up producing such music. Deep Purple had clearly changed, but fortunately they still had quality in abundance.

A notable difference was in the writing credits. Songs were no longer automatically credited to all five band members. This was a decision largely driven by Blackmore. Lord openly admitted to *Circus* magazine at the time that 'the major force in the group for the last couple of years has been Ritchie. It's been his energy that's got us through a lot of our personal problems.' New boy David Coverdale was soon aware of the way things were arranged: 'I could sense, even then, that they all deferred to Ritchie and most definitely didn't want to piss him off but, still, it was quite democratic, and everyone contributed to the development of the songs.'

Having been off the road since June, it was now time for MKIII Deep Purple to take to the stage. Irrespective of the fact that they had just produced one of their best albums to date, and perhaps mindful that Coverdale was still largely inexperienced, a handful of relatively low-key dates in northern Europe were chosen as the debut arena for the young Yorkshireman. Image was vitally important to the band and Coverdale had admitted that his wasn't really befitting for someone fronting one of the biggest bands in the world. Before the album had even been made, the Purple organisation had sent him off to a Harley Street doctor who had prescribed the podgy vocalist with slimming pills. Recently Coverdale has gone on record saying that the pills made him 'emotionally edgy, at times disoriented and certainly sleep deprived.' As a result, even before the first gig, Coverdale had seriously questioned just exactly what he was doing fronting the mighty Deep Purple: 'I didn't tell the band or management that in my chemically compromised state I'd considered leaving before I'd even done a show, yes, I'm glad I didn't go that far – very glad, indeed.'

The tour was planned to start in Denmark's second city, Aarhus, but the plane arrived too late and four thousand disappointed fans were told the news shortly before the gig was due to start. What was

scheduled as the second gig therefore became Deep Purple MKIII's debut at the KB Hallen, in Copenhagen, Denmark on 8 December 1973. Despite Coverdale's nervous state he sailed through the gig with flying colours. By and large it was really only Deep Purple in name, with very little comparison with the MKII line-up. Of course the three original members were still the backbone of the group, but the new sound was vastly different. The deliberate decision taken to radically revamp the stage set effectively made comparison a futile gesture. Six of the eight numbers from *Burn* were introduced, and only two older numbers were retained. *Smoke on the Water* was now such a hugely popular tune globally that, had they not played it, Purple might well have been lynched. The only other MKII number was *Space Truckin'*, which was retained as the closing number of the main set. Regularly clocking in at thirty minutes, it was predominantly instrumental, but did add a section where Glenn Hughes could get a bit funky, something that in time had a detrimental effect on the group's future. Opening the show with four new songs was a brave move, especially considering that the album had not even been released at this stage! For Purple to play a show comprising unfamiliar music shows just how much faith they had in the new songs.

Whilst in Denmark on the debut MKIII tour, the management was keen to get a new song recorded for a potential single B-side, rather than relying on one of the existing album tracks. Following the debut gig a studio was booked for the next day, but with the band having partied hard to celebrate the show, things didn't quite go to plan. The backing took longer to get together than they would ideally have liked, largely due to their fragile state, and they only had the studio booked for a few hours so time was against them. Coverdale turned up late as he slept off the excesses of the previous night but, apart from the time factor, Coverdale's voice wasn't in good shape. Although some lyrics had been written, the end result was that Coverdale and Hughes just added a few backing harmonies and the track, *Coronarias Redig*, essentially ended up as an instrumental with Blackmore soloing freely over the backing.

Shows in Brussels and Frankfurt concluded the mini warm-up tour, and following the Christmas break a few more shows were played in France and Germany in January. The plans were to follow these gigs with a tour of the States commencing in February, however, Jon Lord had been suffering during the European gigs and was quickly diagnosed with acute appendicitis. The tour was put back and MKIII embarked on a month of touring in America in early March.

The *Burn* album was released in February 1974 and proved to be far more successful than *Who Do We Think We Are*, although with hindsight it is possible to say that it could have been even more successful had the band had its way over the choice of single from the album. With *Smoke on the Water* being a massive hit in America, Warner Brothers were keen for a follow-up. Back in England, Purple had generally discarded the need for singles, having not released one since the relative failure of *Never Before*, taken from *Machine Head*. However, the band was keen to see *Sail Away* as the single track. The revitalised MKIII line-up was obviously keen to create its own identity, and *Sail Away* was indicative of the bluesier shift in direction that Blackmore had masterminded. The key to the song's strength is the marvellous groove the band creates. With a slightly funky rhythm it rolls on superbly, courtesy once again of Paice's effortless drumming style. Coverdale puts in a highly passionate performance, and with Blackmore's slightly funky playing, Lord's synth sounds and Glenn Hughes's singing and bass playing, it is Deep Purple a world away from the MKII sound, but equally as classy. Strangely though, with the exception of the album's one and only instrumental cut, *A200*, *Sail Away* was never played live.

Whatever views the band had about the song, Warner's considered *Might Just Take Your Life* to have the greatest commercial potential. The song originated from Jon Lord: '*Might Just Take Your Life* came from a chord sequence of Jon's,' said Ian Paice. It was inspired by the heavy organ sound of Garth Hudson from The Band's song *Chest Fever*. As such, the song had very little in the way of prominent guitar,

and when it was released in March 1974 it was far less successful than *Smoke on the Water* or even *Never Before*, as it failed to make the charts in either the UK or US. Although we will never know if they would have had more success with *Sail Away*, the band was at least proved right that *Might Just Take Your Life* was not ideal single material. As most fans view *Sail Away* as one of the forgotten gems from the Purple canon, the general consensus is that *Sail Away* would have fared better, but such conjecture will have to be left as just that.

With Lord back to full fitness following his appendicitis operation, Deep Purple prepared for their next American tour in grand style. For the first time, and in order to make the long distance travelling around America more enjoyable, a private Boeing jet plane was hired for the tour's duration. For Coverdale, and also to some extent Hughes, travelling on such a grand scale was a true eye-opener. Sadly it also saw the start of drugs creeping into the band. Despite Coverdale's 'Cinderella' elevation from rags to riches in a matter of just a few months, it was the more experienced Glenn Hughes that pretty soon went off the rails. Although happy to have been elevated to the ranks of Purple, he soon became disillusioned with his role as 'second vocalist.' Although Hughes had impressed the band with both his vocal and bass playing abilities, he saw himself primarily as a vocalist. In fact towards the very end of his time with Trapeze, a fourth member had been brought in to play bass so that Hughes could concentrate on his vocal attributes. 'The reality for me was that when I was in Deep Purple, I was so rich and so fucking famous and so unhappy because I wasn't really singing lead vocals, I was taking second seat, and I escaped into a world of drugs,' was the way Glenn explained it.

The drug situation deteriorated as time went on, but during the tour it was Blackmore's behaviour at the California Jam that was the major talking point. The California Jam went down in history as one of the biggest gatherings of music lovers the world has ever seen. The venue was the Ontario Speedway stadium and the list of bands performing reads like a who's who of rock: Earth, Wind & Fire, Rare Earth, Black

Oak Arkansas, Seals & Crofts, the Eagles, Black Sabbath, Emerson Lake & Palmer and Deep Purple. Official ticket sales were reported to be around 170,000, but some eye witnesses claim that, with the amount of people who found their way into the venue without paying, the total figure was nearer 400,000. Being such a prestigious event, ABC TV filmed it for a future broadcast, and although Purple was the headlining band they agreed that ELP would close the all-day event. The reason for this was simple: Purple had a gig the next day in Phoneix, Arizona, so getting off stage earlier would give the crew extra time to pack the gear down and prepare for the lengthy journey to the neighbouring state. Purple's contract stipulated that the band would take the stage at sundown, so they would be the first band on the bill to get the full effects of the stage lighting. To everyone's surprise, the event actually ran ahead of schedule and by the time the stage was set for Purple to go on it was still broad daylight. When the band pointed out that it was too early to take the stage, the festival organisers were less than happy and started threatening them, implying that if the band didn't comply they would never perform in America again. Being the most stubborn, Blackmore stood his ground and called their bluff. To ensure he had things his way, he locked himself away in his trailer, as Jon Lord recalls with some amusement: 'Ritchie locked himself in his caravan, and they had sheriffs banging on the door and all sorts of American heaviness going down and our management running around like headless chickens, agents tearing hair. It was fascinating to watch and I'd love to see it all over again. It would make a great movie. To the eternal credit really of Ritchie it succeeded and we went on at sunset.'

Blackmore explained to Cameron Crowe of *Rolling Stone* magazine how events unfolded: 'The Who's producer – I won't name him – came into my dressing room and demanded that we go on immediately. I had just gotten there. I just ignored him. The guy kept standing there and said we'd be off the show if I wasn't onstage by the time he counted to thirty. I sat there, tuned my guitar and listened to him count out

loud. He hadn't reached fifteen when I had him thrown out. Forget the money we stood to lose, it was a matter of principle. Even Jon Lord came to me in the end and said, "Look, will you go on... for the band?" I told him absolutely not and was ready to quit the band right then and there. Somebody else from ABC came in and asked me politely if I'd go onstage. I was angry, but because he was nice about it, I went on.'

Eventually taking the stage just before sunset wasn't the last of the trouble; it merely set the scene for what was to follow. Blackmore always liked an explosive ending to a show when he knew the cameras were there, but no one expected him to put on quite the spectacle that he did as the show reached its finale. During the climactic ending to *Space Truckin'*, Blackmore had instructed his roadies to put some combustible fuel into the speaker cabinets, and at the appropriate moment they duly caught fire and exploded. But that was just the tip of the iceberg. During the guitar destruction, Blackmore decided to vent his anger at the organisers and focused on the onstage camera as a target for wreaking his revenge. Not only did he trash his guitar against the camera, but also rammed it into the lens, causing great distress to the cameraman in the process! 'I hadn't planned to go for the camera, I was out to kill this guy who gave me the countdown. I thought he'd be onstage. If he had been, you would have seen more than a smashed camera. I don't like violence, but I was raving that night. He talked to us like we were absolute shit. Anyway, I couldn't spot him so I had a go at the camera,' commented Blackmore in his typically uncompromising manner. With police, fire-chiefs and promoters all angered at Blackmore's antics, in order to avoid arrest he was whisked out of the state via helicopter as soon as the show finished.

A year after the event he elaborated about the escapade in an interview with Steve Rosen, 'It was in our contract that we were going on at seven o'clock, I think. And it was about a quarter-past-six. And I really wasn't ready; none of my guitars were in tune. I had no clothes to wear; they were back at the hotel, where I'd left them. And

I thought, "Well, we're in no hurry to go onstage because we've three-quarters of an hour yet." Then I was told if I'm not on the stage in thirty seconds, the whole show would be cancelled. And I said, "Well, you can fuck off." There's lawyers fighting and managers fighting; it was quite funny.'

Unfortunately not all the band members found this quite so humorous, and Glenn Hughes has since commented, 'Everybody in the industry and every fan that reads about Purple will understand that Ritchie Blackmore is an incredibly talented guy who has a very hard time expressing himself to another human being. On a musical level and especially on a personal level, the man is without love. He is everything you've ever read about him, and this is for the people who are reading the book, it's true, the guy is a pretty evil cat. He's never really happy unless things are going his way and if things were going very, very well, if I had a really good night in Purple like Cal Jam, he'd make a point of saying, "You can't have too many more nights like that." He's notorious for pulling the rug from under you. I forgive and forget, that's the kind of person I am. I haven't spoken to Ritchie in a long time. A funny story is that a few years ago I was working with my group in Oslo, and Purple were in town and my band were playing at a gig after Purple and one of the Purple fans ran into Rich in the lobby and said "Oh are you going to see Glenn after?" And he said, "Glenn, Glenn who?"'

The events at the California Jam certainly had a knock-on effect with the organisation, with Edwards and Coletta taking a back seat on the day-to-day affairs concerning the band's touring schedules. The escapades were getting too much for the managers and they handed over the day-to-day organising to crew member Rob Cooksey. However, the age-old adage that 'no publicity is bad publicity' certainly applied to the events surrounding this concert. 'We definitely sold albums after that and got a great response around the world,' said Hughes, adding 'It was a great show for Glenn Hughes and Deep Purple and as you know a lot of people play that bloody thing and

they go "What a great gig for Glenn Hughes that was." It was a great showcase for me so I'm glad people remember it. In fact the whole time with Purple for me was great. So the Cal Jam was a big one for us.' Whether or not Blackmore's behaviour at this event was on the spur of the moment or premeditated, he certainly knew how to draw attention to the band and Deep Purple's line-up changes had done no harm to its popularity.

The hugely successful American tour was immediately followed by MKIII's debut in the UK. Before the dates had been announced, fans were told that Purple would be playing the smaller venues on an extensive tour, which is exactly what they did. Blackmore explained, 'we've insisted on this extensive tour. All our fans should have the opportunity to see the new line-up.' Indeed there were no fewer than twenty-three dates covering Britain extensively, although Liverpool was omitted from the schedule causing some scouse fans to plead via the music press for Purple's management to reconsider this omission; however, this fell on deaf ears. Having said this, in the early-seventies the UK had very few large venues anyway. London's Wembley Empire Pool and Earl's Court were two of very few, but outside the capital the old cinemas and Victorian theatres were really all that was on offer. Even in London, although Purple could have played one large show, they opted instead to perform at three separate venues, undoubtedly much to the annoyance of the road crew. Following a gig in Stoke, the first of the dates in the capital was at the Hammersmith Odeon on 9 May. Roger Glover was in attendance at this show and honestly expressed his views: 'I didn't like it but I was probably prejudiced.'

With the majority of venues being relatively small, this did result in some doubling up. Glasgow had sold out and a second show was added and, likewise, directly after Hammersmith two gigs were played at Norwich's Theatre Royal. Without a day off, it was then back to the Lewisham Odeon in South London for the second of the three performances in the Capital. Graham Hough, a film student at Leeds University, sought permission from Purple's management

to film parts of the show as well as doing backstage interviews. With Blackmore having his own dressing room, the film crew had to wait until the Manchester gig to get their chat with Blackmore, but the whole event was a good indication of how different the business was back in the seventies. One could hardly imagine a top band of today allowing a film student such free access, but for Hough it clearly paid off as he ended up with a job at the BBC where he still works. Sadly, due to the prohibitive cost of celluloid Hough and his crew didn't film the entire show.

Once the film crew did catch up with Blackmore three nights later, his interview was full of the usual Blackmore wind-ups and dismissive comments, but it did throw up one hilarious comment. When questioned why he didn't share a dressing room with the rest of the band, he initially answered truthfully and straight-laced before going on to show the dry sense of humour he possesses, that is more often than not lost on most people: 'I have my own dressing room because I like to tune up and I like my solitude before I go on stage. I tend not to get too involved in people because to be quite honest I find a lot of people boring. I find myself boring most of the time. I always like to be the opposite; I always was at school, that's why I don't smoke. I used to find everybody at school smoking, rebellious image, so because of that I won't smoke and never had. Mind you I was probably doing other things that were just as bad if not worse. I'm still very moody, shy and very honest which a lot of people can't take. The hardest thing in this business is sincerity. Once you can fake that you're laughing.'

The third London gig was in the North of the city at the State Gaumont in Kilburn, and like Lewisham it too was recorded (albeit only on audio), this time professionally by the BBC for its *In Concert* programme. As was quickly becoming a regular occurrence for Deep Purple, despite the fact that the audio document showed that the band was on top form, they declined to do an encore. It is thought that this was as a result of the band's disappointment with the crowd's lack of enthusiasm. Although it is feasible that the audience's reception was

a reflection of their feelings towards the new line-up, according to those who were present it was simply a case of heavy-handed security pushing fans back into their seats every time they got excited!

As had been the case in America, Elf was the support band and by now they had been signed to Purple's own label, bonding them closer to the Purple organisation in the process. The second Elf album *Carolina County Ball* had been released just prior to the tour, with Roger Glover handling the production. Elf Roadie Raymond D'addario recalls that, despite the growing bond between the two bands, Elf fell prey to Blackmore's love of practical jokes: 'We used to play all these little theatres with orchestra pits and one of the last shows we did, Ritchie had the crew go out and get all these bags of flour and they put holes in them and pelted Elf with them. There was Ronnie trying to sing and these little bags of flour hit him and exploded.'

Aside from a couple of isolated gigs, June and July were set aside for free time before the band returned to Clearwell Castle to start rehearsing for the next album. The free time was nothing more than a busman's holiday for Jon Lord, who completed two outside projects. *First of the Big Bands* was a joint collaboration with Tony Ashton that the pair had been working on sporadically over a couple of years. Although the sleeve information gave little away, it featured Cozy Powell and Terry Cox on drums, Howie Casey and Dave Caswell were among the horn players, and several guitarists were used: Peter Frampton, Mick Grabham, Caleb Quayle and Ronnie Wood. 'Ronnie had to leave halfway through the *We're Gonna Make It* take,' explained Lord to *Melody Maker*. 'It's amazing to me that the album hangs together as well as it does, considering it was done over two years,' continued Jon. 'Actually there was one break of about ten months when no recording was done at all. This was at the time that Tony joined Family and Deep Purple were touring overseas.'

The commission by German TV to perform at the final gala night of Munich's four-day Prix Jeunesse festival for young composers went

ahead on 1 June. Not only did Lord and Schöner once again perform the *Continuo on B.A.C.H* piece, but they also premièred a new work called *Windows*. Although the evening was a success, Lord was less sure about the decision to release the recording, which Purple Records put out at the same time as the *First of the Big Bands* album. '*Windows* was never intended as an album, it was simply a concert in Munich. I'm not personally convinced at the moment that it makes best sense on an album,' he said defensively. It was without doubt the most challenging of his orchestral works, and one gets the distinct feeling that Schöner's joint involvement was largely the reason behind this more disjointed and experimental work. Lord was honest enough to explain that he had reservations about it: 'I was asked to do it in England but turned it down. Harlech TV were interested in putting it on at Caernarfon Castle and there was also talk of the Albert Hall. I must admit to having chickened out slightly. Although it worked in Germany I don't think it would work in England.'

With Lord involved in side projects, even Ritchie Blackmore was roped in to do his first session for several years, for sixties star Adam Faith. However, when it was released most Purple fans were probably oblivious to it. In 1973, Faith had been seriously injured in a car crash, but not only did he miraculously survive he actually made a full recovery. Although his singing career had declined, he had tried his hand at acting in the popular UK TV series, *Budgie*. Faith was also gaining success managing new singing sensation Leo Sayer, so his recording career was definitely playing second fiddle. However, he signed a deal with Warner Bros for a comeback album, appropriately called *I Survive*. Faith wanted the introduction to the opening track (*I Survived*) to simulate a car crash and specifically asked Ritchie to play the passage. 'We were thinking who would be the perfect person for the piece and Ritchie was the one. What he's done is brilliant,' explained Faith when he spoke to *Melody Maker* just after the album was released. The album was recorded at Kingsway with Martin Birch engineering. He also played rhythm guitar on the same track, and it

is most likely that it was through Birch that Blackmore was brought into the session. Sadly the opening thirty seconds of the album was Blackmore's only contribution to the record, and it remains one of his most obscure sessions.

While Purple were enjoying this brief period of relative relaxation, Roger Glover announced to the press his ambitious new project. Despite the bitterness involved in being squeezed out of the band, he didn't walk away from the organisation that had effectively dispensed with his services as a member of Deep Purple. In August Glover spoke to *Melody Maker*, explaining what he had been doing since that last tour of Japan a year earlier: 'When I left Deep Purple I took a job as A & R man with Purple Records. It didn't really agree with me though, and I felt a bit like I'd retired, and it's a thankless task having to listen to young hopefuls and turn them down.' Glover had spent the rest of his time with outside production and session work. Within the Purple organisation he continued his involvement with Elf; outside of the Purple set-up he worked with Scottish band Nazareth for which he went on to produce three albums. Later he also went on to produce Rory Gallagher, Judas Priest and Status Quo amongst others. But the main reason for speaking to the press was to promote what was undoubtedly the most demanding project he had involved himself with since leaving Purple. *The Butterfly's Ball, and the Grasshopper's Feas*t, a poem by William Roscoe from 1807, had been the inspiration for Alan Aldridge's picture book of the same name published in 1973 in conjunction with contemporary writer William Plomer. The book sold well and the inevitable spin offs ensued. Plans were in place for a twenty-six part TV series, a full-length animation for cinema, a stage musical and a soundtrack, and Glover was approached to write the music.

On the face of it, approaching a musician renowned for being in one of the heaviest bands in the world seems like an odd choice for a project aimed at an easy listening family audience. Glover seemed just as puzzled as anyone else as to why he was commissioned: 'I still

haven't a clue how it came my way. I had been in a well-known band where I helped to write a lot of songs, but why on earth they entrusted me with the project I'll never know.' Glover's own theory is that the idea for him to do it came from British Lion Films. This company had been involved with the *Concerto* project back in 1969, and Glover met John Craig from the film company who offered him the work. Glover later heard that Pink Floyd were also in the running for the project. 'Maybe they were looking for a heavy progressive band.' Said Glover. 'The music at the moment is coming out fairly un-heavy. None of it is heavy rock. I really don't like heavy rock.' He explained, somewhat unexpectedly. 'There's one song I'd like to make vicious and aggressive though, and for that I'd like to get Dave Coverdale.' Although Glover had openly admitted he hadn't been impressed with the new line-up at the Hammersmith gig he attended, he didn't let his prejudice get in the way of recognising Coverdale's talent, although his desire to have Deep Purple's new singer perform on his own project must have seemed a little surprising to many people at the time. With Deep Purple MKIII due to go back on tour later in the year, Glover also expressed his feeling about no longer being in the band: 'I've missed being on the road a lot more that I thought I would. When I left the band it was great to be off the road because it had been one long slog. The music wasn't alive anymore, the music was dead, and it was just going on stage and going through the motions. But what I miss now is hard to define. It's not hotels, planes, dressing rooms; it's that confrontation with the public. I don't get that anymore.'

If *Burn* had been in effect a debut album from a new band, at least it launched Deep Purple MKIII in grand style. Follow-ups are notoriously tricky albums to make, and *Stormbringer*, the successor to *Burn*, supports this theory.

Despite the difficulties in creating a sequel to *Burn*, Deep Purple soldiered on. Incredibly, in the subsequent years they have released an further thirteen studio albums, in fact their most recent album

Whoosh! **was released as recently as 7 August 2020. Despite many line-up changes, fall outs and break ups, Deep Purple have remained one of the best loved and most influential heavy rock bands of all time. That they are still releasing material to this day is a testament to the passion and longevity of the musicians that make up this unstoppable band, long may they continue.**

Deep Purple

MUSIC LEGENDS